

[Herbert Wheeler]

Dup. 1 Vermont [1938 - 9?]

FORM A

Vermont

Mrs. Rebecca N. Halley

West Newbury, Vermont

October 12, 20, 1938

Square Dances, Play Parties

1. October 12, 20, 1938.

2. At Bert Wheeler's home.

3. Herbert Wheeler, West Newbury, Vt.

6. Bert was working in his garden. He was digging beets, getting them ready to go down cellar. He wiped his knife on his pants and shut it up as we went toward the house talking about the "Tornadic". It was a beautiful day, nice and warm in the sun, the first day I was there, so we sat on the cement steps and had our visit. The next time we sat in the house. Bert has a pail of ashes by the old broken rocking chair which he uses as a spittoon. His wife passed away, suddenly, toward the end of summer. Now Bert is one more widower living along with his horse and his hens. He is an adept at hitting the spittoon from any angle. He gives it half a glance and a brown stream slides across the room and cuddles in the ashes, which give a surprised puff of fine, grey, dead smoke,

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The house sits on a little rise above Peach Brook. There is a lawn marked by the curve of the drive. Two or three trees group together at the end of the house. Across the fence Peggie, 2 the horse, listened interestedly to our conversation. While we visited the grain man from Groton stopped and gave Bert news of his relatives there. Bert has relatives everywhere round about.

The kitchen is a forlorn place, missing the touch of its mistress. Bert does the best he can and there are no apologies offered or expected. I would like to help him "red up a bit" but I know it would infer a slur on his housekeeping, so we walk carefully round the subject. 1
Dup. Vermont 1938 - 9

FORM B

Vermont

Mrs. Rebecca M. Halley

West Newbury, Vermont

October 12, 20, 1938

Character Sketch of Bert Wheeler, including Play Parties and Square Dances

1. Bert in a Vermont Yankee.
2. October 26, 1870
3. No children. His wife died the last of this summer.
4. Always lived right round Newbury.
5. Went to Newbury schools.

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6. Always been a farmer of sorts. His wife was a nurse and went out on cases. She took care of old Albert Kendrick in his last illness and Kendrick left his place to them, since he had no relatives.

9. Bert is a small man, short, slender. He droops. His moustache droops, his eyes have that downward wistfulness of a hound dog. His shoulders droop as though the heavy cares of the world had been too much for him. He is bowlegged from sitting with his knees apart to spit between them. His favorite position is to perch on stump or step, place his elbows on his angled knees and contemplate the world over a stream of tobacco juice. His voice is disconsolate. It has the surprising habit of huskily fading to nothing. It sounds as though it started strong from his chest and met some obstruction which tore it to shreds. His laugh is rusty. It seems to hurt him for often he chokes. A futile little man waiting his time out to join the wife who has been for many years his motivating force. He is kind. He is lonesome. He told Jim, "I wisht your wife would come agin'. 'Twas a fine visit we had them times. Sakes! I don't see many folks."